U.S. NEWS

Creek Fire forces Christmas Eve evacuations north of San Diego

Thousands of people were told to evacuate the Camp Pendleton military base and nearby communities as the Creek Fire spread.

A wildfire in northern San Diego County, Calif., on Dec. 24 triggered evacuation orders.

@CALFIRESANDIEGO / via Twitter

Dec. 24, 2020, 10:36 AM PST / Updated Dec. 24, 2020, 1:14 PM PST

By Tim Fitzsimons

A wildfire near a military base 50 miles north of San Diego is forcing thousands of people to evacuate on Christmas Eve, according to local fire authorities.

The fire broke out Wednesday in northern San Diego County, much of which is occupied by Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. NBC San Diego reported that about 7,000 people were ordered to evacuate overnight in the base communities and in neighboring Fallbrook.

In an update posted just after 9 a.m. Pacific Time, Ryan Rushing, a division chief at the Camp Pendleton Fire Department, said the fire had burned over 3,000 acres was zero percent contained.

Rushing said the fire's quick development was "fueled by steep terrain, difficult access, and winds."

Another tweet said that the military camp's "Fallbrook gate is closed to all traffic except for emergency vehicles."

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Authorities had previously said around 7:30 a.m. PT that the Creek Fire was 35 percent contained.

The San Diego Sheriff shared a video on Twitter of one of nearly 40 helicopter water drops the department performed over the Creek Fire.

> **San Diego Sheriff** @SDSheriff
>
> Swooping in for a water drop. @SDSheriff ASTREA has been working w/ @CALFIRESANDIEGO @MCIWPendletonCA & @NorthCountyFire to put out the #CreekFire . Our helicopter

@NorthCountyFire to put out the #CreekFire. Our helicopter can drop more than 300 gallons of water per pass. We've made nearly 40 drops since 7:30 a.m. #KeepingYouSafe #deputy

12:24 PM · Dec 24, 2020

75 25 people are Tweeting about this

Early Thursday morning, Camp Pendleton ordered the evacuation of people located at its DeLuz Housing, Wounded Warrior Battalion and Lake O'Niel Campground.

Response to the Creek Fire is being led by Cal Fire, the U.S. Forest Service and the Camp Pendleton Police Department.

This is a breaking news story and will be updated. Please check back again for updated news.

Tim Fitzsimons

Tim Fitzsimons is a reporter for NBC News.

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